

# CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

*A Christian Journal of Opinion*

## Coexistence Under a Nuclear Stalemate

The most obvious condition of our existence is the nuclear balance of terror. Each side has enough of the dreaded weapons to make the difference between victory and defeat irrelevant and to make it imperative for the whole world that a nuclear war be prevented. There is little prospect of reducing any general war to non-nuclear proportions. Efforts at nuclear disarmament will undoubtedly continue but with small prospect of success since every disarmament conference is bound to deal with the whole balance of power between the contestants and not merely with nuclear weapons.

The peace is bound to be precarious because it depends upon preserving a fairly even balance of nuclear weapons, for a serious imbalance would tempt the stronger side to make demands that might result in hysteria on the part of the weaker side. No such situation has ever before existed in the history of the world. Mankind is fated to exist under the threat of a "last judgment" created by the ingenuity of human inventiveness and the advance of modern science.

The second condition of our coexistence is that only a nuclear war is ruled out, while all the inevitable power rivalries that have existed since the beginning of history continue. The hazards created by a struggle between power blocs would be severe even if the blocs represented similar cultures, but now the world is divided between two congeries of forces under Russian and American hegemony.

The one alliance is dominated by an ideology that has formed a new civilization, appealing particularly to the technically backward nations of the world to whom it offers quick industrialization. It

also has many characteristics of a democratic society, particularly in the realm of education where it is the custom of Communist society to relate opportunities to talent without reference to birth.

We have too long thought of communism in terms of analogy with the moribund autocracies of the past in which there was no social mobility. The Communist civilization must develop hierarchies of authority and power that stand in strong contrast to its early equalitarian creed. But it will produce a social mobility that will engage the loyalty and enthusiasm of its youth. We must expect it to be immensely attractive to the peoples of Asia and Africa, though it will be deficient in the virtues of the "open society" that has gradually developed by a tortuous process in the West and can hardly be duplicated in the rest of the world.

The third condition of coexistence is most relevant to American interests, for it involves the effective hegemony of our own nation in the non-Communist world. This hegemony offers some real hazards since we are probably too technocratic and too interested in high living standards that will seem vulgar to the poor nations ambitious to escape the deprivations of agrarian poverty. Furthermore the equilibrium of social forces that has made liberty compatible with both justice and stability are beyond the immediate reach of the nascent nations. They can more easily slip from traditional collectivism to technically efficient collectivism; they may regard our democracy not as a necessity but a luxury.

Freedom of spirit is a necessity in a genuinely humanistic culture. But stability and justice are

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a luxury that can be afforded only by nations that have achieved that equilibrium of social forces upon which justice depends, nations that have cultural and economic mutualities strong enough to bind the community into a unity so that political liberty may be hazarded. It is this aspect of freedom, so dear to the West, that may seem so irrelevant to many of the nascent nations. After all many of the nations in the non-Communist world are military or other dictatorships.

President Eisenhower's project for an exchange of visits with Premier Khrushchev is undoubtedly hazardous, but it must be credited to the President's courage and ingenuity that he is willing to hazard this in light of the complete diplomatic impasse. He is undertaking to build, in effect, a bridge of understanding across a political chasm on which no diplomatic bridge could be built—witness the failure to reach a disarmament agreement and the even graver failure to reach an accord on Berlin and East Germany. This means that we have despaired of any short-range results and are therefore undertaking to create some long-range results in understanding.

The project is commendable because the misunderstandings between the two hegemonous powers are very great. Russia looks at us through the myopia of the Marxist dogma; it judges us in terms of the social and political facts that obtained in the capitalism of the nineteenth century. Khrushchev, who has leavened the lump of Marxist dogmatism with a fair grasp of the empirical realities, still mouths the Marxist slogans against capitalism. He may still be too much the dogmatist to realize the true nature of our realities. Nevertheless, his visit will be a window through which Russian journalists may see and report the actual facts about American capitalism and democracy. His visit may contribute something to a relaxation of those dimensions of the tensions that are due to ideological distortions.

On the other hand we also have some serious misconceptions of Russian life. They arose from Stalinist despotism, which persuaded all or most of us to regard communism as a pure distortion of the Marxist utopian dream. Russia under the post-Stalin oligarchy is not a democracy and may never be. But there are dynamic and creative elements in Russian civilization to which we are, if blind, blind to our peril. Among them is an educational system that offers a fair equality of opportunity to talented youth in a technically ad-

vancing civilization that bids fair to match our own and to surpass it in some instances. This remains true even if Mr. K.'s boasts are extravagant. We are not dealing with a new version of czarist despotism. That old analogy, so polemically popular, does not describe any of the essential facts in the present Russian scene. Thus Eisenhower's visit may correct almost as many of our misconceptions as will Khrushchev's. The remaining tension is a part of the price we must pay for living in the most hazardous period of history and for being one of the two great "imperial" powers in this period.

R. N.

## LET'S KEEP IT QUANTITATIVE

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR., has written a provocative memorandum to the leaders of the Democratic Party. He urges them to provide the "creative leadership" that the nation is going to demand in 1960. He says that a new period of "movement" is due in American politics because our national affairs have an "inherent cyclical rhythm," alternating positive with negative government. All the cultural signs of an impending "resurgence of the national vitality," he says, are now present. Let the Democratic Party take notice.

We can agree with much of what Mr. Schlesinger says, and—even more—we can endorse what he is trying to do (persuade the Democrats to follow an intelligently liberal course). We can also join in the hope that the victors in 1960 will represent energy, intelligence and social conscience.

We can agree, too, that there should be a new emphasis on the public interest at the center of a liberal domestic program. Part of this has to do with public services. Mr. Schlesinger, his Harvard colleague John Kenneth Galbraith and others have usefully dramatized the contrast between private wealth and public poverty. ("... While our cars grow longer and our kitchens grow shinier... our communities grow more disorganized, our schools more crowded," etc.) More broadly, we need an understanding of the public good as a guide in the conflicts of private interest and of value in the more and more complex society.

Protestant social action, which has centered on the goal of justice (understood biblically and dramatically as the redressing of a blatant imbalance, in the interests of the poor and oppressed), probably needs now to broaden its emphasis to include more the theme of the public good. Perhaps the

ecumenical standard of the "responsible society" does that, but Mr. Schlesinger's discussion of the public interest makes a much livelier, much more thorough and specific application to current American politics.

However, let us now enter a qualification. Through his memorandum there runs a thread about the current "spiritual" state of American culture—"spiritual unemployment," "a self-estranged social order," "rising spiritual discontent," the beat generation, the interest in *Dr. Zhivago*, the "religious boom (Billy Graham, etc.)"—that shows a "widespread yearning for spiritual purpose of some sort in life." All this, it is implied, will result in and perhaps be answered by a new political movement, perhaps with a leader like Theodore Roosevelt, that will reflect not the "quantitative liberalism" (hours and wages) of the New Deal but a new "qualitative liberalism" (schools and parks) "dedicated to bettering the quality of people's lives and opportunities." We will move on to the "more elusive and complicated task of fighting for individual dignity, identity and fulfillment in a mass society."

Mr. Schlesinger may underrate the change in the American situation and overrate the place of politics in the human situation. He might almost be taken to confirm the conservatives' complaint that liberal Democrats think they can do *everything* by political movements and governmental policies. ("Hello, Jones. Spiritual yearnings reported in Omaha. What is the Department of Interior doing about it?") There are things that cannot be won by some organized collective political movement, with or without Teddy Roosevelt, and they most especially include the old and very lonely struggle for "individual dignity, identity and fulfillment."

Mr. Schlesinger rejects the idea that there is a "permanent turn" to conservatism in America, and we are happy to join him. But still—as some of Mr. Schlesinger's own examples indicate—there is a considerable change, at least in mood and style. One can see it in college students, in literature, in churchfolk. It is in us, not only in others.

Politics is, curiously, at once more important (that is, if you include foreign policy more centrally that Mr. Schlesinger does) and less central: more important to the world in the thermonuclear age, less central to the self in a post-ideological age. Politics, even in the thermonuclear age, deals with the surface (the very, *very* important surface); it should not pretend to provide the deep springs of value, of cultural renewal, of personal salvation.

We do not have and probably cannot have the

same investment of spiritual capital in the grandiose, rhetorical, ideological politics that was possible in the earlier periods of moving "forward" that Mr. Schlesinger likes. We cannot expect again that national life will be in the center of the self's life, that politics will be in the center of the national life, and that domestic social reform will be in the center of politics.

This does not mean that there cannot be a responsible and creative politics. Perhaps in a more sober, relative, careful, empirical, non-ideological, understated mood, in a style that does not talk so grandly about Bold New Steps Forward with Vision, in a time that demotes politics from the ultimate realms of salvation and meaning and final values, we can have a better politics. Let us work in politics for the specific persons, parties and policies that will do the things that need to be done—but leave the "quality" of life to some other department.

And meanwhile we hope that Mr. Schlesinger wins his main point. W. L. M.

#### THE LABOR REFORM ACT OF 1959

THIS IS WRITTEN on Labor Day, a Labor Day that is under the shadow of the recent enactment of the Labor Reform Act of 1959 by the Congress. The most responsible labor leaders, such as James Carey and Walter Reuther, regard it as basically in inspiration an anti-labor measure. They may exaggerate as they and their colleagues exaggerated when they called the Taft-Hartley law a slave-labor law. The fact that Senator Kennedy and most of his liberal colleagues finally voted for the bill indicates that it is not as bad as the labor leaders claim, that it is the best compromise that could have been agreed upon.

A minority of labor leaders, chiefly the incredible Beck and Hoffa, made a new labor law necessary at this time, politically necessary at least for almost every legislator. But it was unfortunate that it became necessary to accept a compromise that pleased Senator Goldwater and the most unabashed enemies of any kind of labor union that is likely to be effective! There is also a touch of irony in the fact that those who were most eager for the enactment of a tough law happen to be the very people who oppose the intervention of the Federal Government in local affairs. The Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans have zealously supported a law that makes the Federal Government determine the constitution and by-laws of every union local.

Organized labor has come a long way and the



nation has come a long way with it in less than a generation. In the early Thirties the labor movement was a great cause and it was usually the victim of quite ruthless corporations. It is hard to remember how ruthless they were in their intimidation of union organizers and in their treatment of strikers. There is a history here, a recent history, that must not be forgotten when we are being told so much about the corruption and violence in some unions. The political and legal changes of the Roosevelt period and especially the enactment of the Wagner Act together with the rise of a new generation of industrial leaders who came to accept the unions, sometimes as necessary evils and sometimes as instruments for better industrial relations, gave organized labor a powerful position in our national life.

The community needs to be protected against labor racketeers, and the rank and file members of labor unions need protection against corrupt and tyrannical labor leaders. But our emphasis should be on the overcoming of such specific abuses in the labor movement and not on the curbing of the basic economic and political power of labor as an important part of the population.

It used to be said without hesitation that of all the social groups with power, labor was the one whose real interests were closest to the public interest. This may not now be as clear as it was twenty years ago but it is not a foolish statement if the emphasis is put on "real interests" and not on the will of irresponsible labor leaders. The reason for the statement is that what most mem-

bers of labor unions ask for themselves are not exclusive privileges but only those advantages that can be shared by the whole community. In all modern industrial societies the political base for economic reforms from which the people generally have benefited has been organized labor.

So, we are somewhat in the position of the liberal senators who voted for the new law. A law was required. But we regret that it was a law that could evoke such bitter opposition from the finest leaders of labor. The outsider cannot say how far they are right in seeing in this law hindrances to organizing the unorganized and seeing it as the means by which the best union leadership can be hamstrung by litigation. At least we must be alert to these dangers.

The indignation aroused by the corrupt leaders and the recognition that any great power center needs some watching and checking should not obscure the basic facts about the role of the labor movement. It is well to emphasize the non-economic contribution of the labor movement, what it has done to give status and dignity to a large part of our population. Every human institution develops its flaws and in this case there are always powerful interests that are only too eager to use those flaws as an excuse to weaken the labor movement as such. A labor movement strong enough to defend itself and to advance the welfare of its members is essential for democracy in an industrial society; if it is not healthy within and if it cannot pull its weight the economy will become intolerable.

J. C. B.

## Faith and Morals on the College Campus

WALDO BEACH

AMERICAN higher education seems to be suffering from a kind of guilty conscience about the quality of its product. At least, if the rash of recent self-studies<sup>1</sup> on the ethical impact of college be taken as index, we are in the midst of a very significant self-examination of the classical and elusive question of the relation of learning and goodness.

It is not to be wondered at that the radical growth and transformation of higher education in America should produce a new type of moral ideal and new kinds of moral practices among college students today. The small, cohesive church college community of the nineteenth century, with its

classical curriculum and acutely Christian moral sense, celebrated in required chapel and assumed in common classroom discourse, has been supplanted by the huge, sprawling, anomic state university that is perforce largely "neutral" toward subjective questions of religion and morality. This shift produces a moral climate of opinion which may not be "godless" but which is certainly morally confused and anarchic.

The analyses and diagnoses of the moral life of

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<sup>1</sup> Reference here is to such books and monographs as: Philip Jacob, *Changing Values in College* (Harper & Bros., 1957); Allen Barton and Paul Lazarsfeld, *Studying the Effects of College Education* (Edward Hazen Foundation, 1959); Edward D. Eddy, *The College Influence on Student Character* (American Council on Education, 1959); Max Wise, *They Come for the Best of Reasons* (American Council on Education, 1958).

the average college student in mid-twentieth century, whether studied statistically or in depth, are yet quite incomplete and the prescriptions yet more uncertain. This article is an attempt to assess some features of these profiles of student character from the standpoint of Christian ideology, to suggest some normative Christian insights that might be prescribed and to note some recent developments of moment towards moral renewal.

### **The Cautious Generation**

There is general agreement among these studies as to a certain constellation of qualities in the American student's moral make-up. For one thing, he is remarkably conservative in his general stance and outlook, not in the sense necessarily that he is a Republican politically and a capitalist economically, but in the deeper sense that he is apt to choose the safe rather than the adventurous way and prefer security to independence. His dominant image of human destiny, however inarticulate he may be about it, seems to be one of a safe berth in the corporation or institution, singing the idylls of suburbia rather than the daring, lonesome destiny of a pioneer. "Belonging" and "togetherness" are very dear to him: independence and separateness unattractive.

This is more than an adolescent passion for crowd approval. It is also compounded by a lack of high causes, in championing which independence from the crowd becomes a virtue. This devotion to social safety and security may be a kind of psychological hostage to the nuclear fortunes that threaten his cosmic security.

Indeed, the college student's lack of ardor for any causes or crusades is a quite distinct negative quality that is evident in the pictures of his soul. In contrast to the era not long past, when such causes as the Student Volunteer Movement and the student Y's elicited, among at least the religiously-minded, much idealistic dedication and vocational commitment, the current mood is one of disillusionment with causes, publicly at least. The direction of thought in student conferences is inward, towards issues of belief and faith, rather than outward towards action and crusades.

It is noteworthy in this connection that even the few rebels, the "angry young men" who stand apart, are negative rather than positive in their rebellion against convention or restraint. The nexus of their protest is a refusal to go the usual path trodden by the "careful young men," rather than a positive humanitarian goal such as enticed the liberal minorities on campus in the Thirties.

Where are the pro-labor groups of yesteryear, or the crusading pacifists? The negative rebellion is typified in extreme form by the Beatniks, the devout iconoclasts who make up only a tiny percentage of the college population.

Another way to describe this general lack of ardor on campus is to point to the high status given to the virtue of "tolerance" in the collegiate value-scale. Yet this easy tolerance of diversity is a virtue (if indeed it be that) not particularly hard-won, in light of the American homogeneity of campus mores, nor particularly deep since it is based more on moral indecision than on sure conviction or consideration for conscientious differences.

### **Piety Without Morality**

The trend toward or away from religion on campus is extremely difficult to measure and quite eludes statistical grasp. The consensus is that as compared to a generation ago, students prize religion, or at least church-going, more highly. The quality of this religious subscription, however, is generally tepid and automatic. As in suburbia, God is taken for granted, with no great torture of soul, as comfortable presiding assurance.

On some campuses, especially in the South, this automatic piety is quite insufferable. The visiting "religious leader" may find himself driven to assume the role of a Nietzsche or Kierkegaard or find solace in conversations with the campus atheist, if he can find one, behind the barn. This exaggerates the matter, to be sure, but it does indicate that one of the tasks of Christian apologetics on any campus is to raise radical and shattering questions, so that authentic faith can emerge out of doubt and despair.

The lack of vitality in religious belief is indicated also by the separation of the patterns of devotion from ethical action. Philip Jacob summarizes the matter among students thus: "Their religion does not carry over to guide and govern important decisions in the secular world. . . . God is worshipped, dutifully and with propriety, but the campus is not permeated by a live sense of His presence."

The separation of religious belief from ethical action, a split on which college students have no monopoly, is accompanied by an alarming decline in moral responsibility. The reports from all the fronts are disturbing. On church or state campuses, the incidence of cheating on examinations, sexual promiscuity and wanton destruction of property are very high. The "careful young men" who give the "right" answers in class or sit in docile obedi-

ence in chapel have no apparent compunctions in dormitories against ripping telephones out of pay booths, or painting the chapel steps indelibly red in the dark of the night. According to Jacob, systematic cheating is "a common practice rather than the exception at many major institutions." The moral aspects of academic performance are sometimes blithely disregarded in the drive for grades. (The writer once received a term paper on the topic of "Honesty" that proved to be plagiarized from beginning to end.)

### **Doctrine and Conscience**

Moral irresponsibility of this sort is more than can be explained by the adolescent instinct for "cutting up," or by the profligacy of an affluent society that is wasteful of its surfeit of goods by general habit. The irresponsibility toward things and persons is due more profoundly to a lack of inner accountability to a moral monitor beyond the crowd or the dean's office. Here emerges the inevitably religious dimension of the problems of morality. Inside the question of responsibility is the question of accountability. In the "flat" universe of the undergraduate, when horizontal "other-directed" loyalties obliterate vertical and "inner-directed" ones, the character-structure that results is not unnaturally one that is smooth, affable, congenial, long on adaptability but short on inner integrity when no one is watching.

It is precisely at this point that a Christian analysis of the campus scene reveals a development of prime importance. From all reports, college students are as receptive to explications of Christian theology as they are resistant to moralizing. Chapel sermons that encourage or implore students to "be good" or "follow the gleam" are poison. Yet treatments of classical issues of the Christian faith, in pulpit or classroom, and treatments of the encounter of Christian with non-Christian doctrine, are gladly heard and intensely debated. This eagerness is more than an intellectual parlor game. It represents a genuine hunger to find a center of meaning in the academic whirl-around.

Christian doctrine becomes relevant to campus life both on the intellectual and moral side. Intellectually, the curriculum most students confront is sheer anarchy, like nothing so much as the classic definition of hell, "just one damned thing after another." Students take courses because they are prescribed in the catalog but with no incentive derived from a sense of one in the many or threads of integrity running through them. Academic listlessness is the result.

The reason Christian doctrine is such a fascination to many students is that, in their search for intellectual integrity, they sense, and rightly, that the classical Christian scheme of things, its view of God, man and history, provides better than any other world-view the frame of meaning in which to incorporate the random pluralism of their courses. The understanding of even this "post-Christian" culture requires familiarity with some such faith standpoint.

On the moral side, a grasp of something of the theological structure of Christian thought and a prophetic sense of the moral stringency of the holy is clearly the way to achieve some renewed sense of moral responsibility among students in the case of property and concern for their neighbors. It was noted above that the problem of responsibility is the problem of accountability. Moral seriousness is usually the fruit of a renewed sense of living in the sight of One "unto whom all hearts are open." One must speak here more prescriptively, but it is to be hoped that the current revival of interest in theology will bear some such moral fruit and provide a ground for moral action more solid than the somewhat frothy idealism of the Twenties and Thirties, whose impetus derived from a progressive philosophy of history.

### **The Search for Community**

Another significant development of the last decade has been the rise of religious "centers" on campus. As the university sprawls further and further out and even the small college gets too big to have a sense of community, the need for a smaller cohesive center becomes the more imperative to enable the student to overcome the anonymity of the lonely campus crowd.

Usually under denominational auspices, but happily ecumenical in spirit, these centers, as fast abuilding on state as on private campuses, represent a search for community—in depth—which in many ways the fraternities and sororities fail to provide. Some of these student religious centers, such as the Faith-and-Life Community at the University of Texas, are lively experiments in relating norms of Christian theology and ethics to intellectual, economic, racial and political decisions on campus. Worship services making use of quite untraditional symbols are serious attempts to overcome the perfunctoriness of ritualism. The talk is of "brokenness," "alienation," "involvement," "tragedy," "grace and forgiveness." Kafka, Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Tillich are the popular names discussed if not read at first hand.



All this represents a significant attempt to come to terms with the threatening tragedies that loom close and to reckon seriously with the anticipated emptiness of the plastic and chromium routines of suburbia. Though no one could safely predict a widespread authentic Christian revival emerging out of the present student generation, there does seem to be a promising minority movement that is theologically in earnest, seeking the kinds of Christian answers relevant to the hard decisions they must make in a post-liberal world. As Edward Eddy notes in the work mentioned above:

At the same time that they are wrapped

in their own tiny world, they look with interest upon the possibility of becoming vital and active evidences of the doctrines they appear to avoid. They will not, however, respond to empty moralizing. They will not commit themselves until they have found what they consider adequate grounds for commitment.

The new religious "centers" on campus, with their program of worship, corporate moral self-discipline and discussion of the spiritual meanings of academic study provide a most promising context for the development of a serious Christianity on campus.

## Religion and Public Higher Education: An Appraisal

MILTON D. McLEAN

CURRENT CHANGES in public institutions of higher learning are having far-reaching effects on the religious attitudes of students. The development of new universities and expansion of the old, changes in the types of student bodies and curricula will affect attitudes toward the role of voluntary student religious organizations, credit courses in religion and the interpretation of the separation principle.

A century ago, educational patterns for both private and public higher learning were set by the colonial colleges. As late as the eighties, a Tom Brown entering a New England college would have been

under no misapprehension as to the place of religion and morals. It was a distinctly religious institution. He knew that before he started from home and expected nothing else. Latin, Greek, mathematics, religion were all of a piece. . . . There were, of course, state universities, "somewhere out West," and here and there a technical school in the East in which chapel and the church were lightly regarded, and where all kinds of freedom were allowed. They lured him not. . . . More than likely Tom came from a religious home, where family prayers and the blessing at table were all in the day's work. (Cornelius Howard Patton and Walter Taylor Field in *A Study of New England College Life in the Eighties*.)

Had Tom Brown been lured "somewhere out West" to a state university in Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois or Ohio in the eighties and nineties he, too, would have attended a chapel service and come under the pastoral guidance of the president and dean. However, at the turn of the century

gradual acceptance of "the new education"—co-education, elective courses and seminars modeled after German universities; the rise of "the new science," in particular geology and biology and the social sciences; the emergence of "the new philosophy," the pragmatism of James and the instrumentalism of Dewey; and during the past half-century, the accent on naturalism and determinism, counter-balanced in part in recent years by a revival in theology and a new realism in literature; the birth of a new physics and a new technology; and the pressing demands for specialization in every field have completely changed the picture.

A concurrent change was taking place in the number and kinds of students enrolled in public universities and colleges. Prior to the last decade of the last century student bodies were small (under 1,000) and homogeneous (largely Protestant). Present-day state universities are modern cities of learning with diverse student populations that number in the tens of thousands and represent all classes and creeds. Protestants are again made aware of religious pluralism. No one can act any longer as though he lived in a Protestant or even secular community.

The presence on these campuses of thousands of young people, away from home for the first time, created a situation that could not be met by either the local churches or the Christian associations. This opened the way for a new type of ministry, anticipated by a few pioneering student religious workers in 1910 and perceptively described by Clarence Proudy Shedd in *The Church Follows the Student*.

The distinctive task of the minister to students is to make a *specific* religious message and witness

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relevant to the lives of students and faculty in these new cities of learning; this is exceedingly difficult. It is not uncommon to find the frustrations faced by chaplains and ministers being projected onto the university, or their own agencies. Clichés about the "brokenness of the university," or the evils of "the organization man," or "secularism" typify these frustrations. This is not to say that these expressions do not indicate anti-religious factors in the communities of learning; they do. But the problems are not resolved by subtle forms of name-calling. The image of the New England college, not infrequently held by the student religious worker, is gone forever. Thanks to the prophetic leadership of many of our theological seminaries, men and women who have these qualifications are finding their way to the large state university campus.

### Religious Studies in the Curriculum

It has frequently been assumed that the principle of separation prevents the teaching of religion. Hence in the past relatively few public colleges and universities granted credit for courses in religion. However, the notion that religion is *not taught* in public colleges and universities, simply because courses on "religion" are not included in the catalogue, is an illusion. What has occurred is that religion is taught covertly as an aspect of other disciplines by instructors who may or may not be qualified, rather than taught openly as a discipline in its own right by instructors selected to meet the academic standards in this field.

As a result, "religion" may be presented as a desirable or undesirable sentiment, or as an ethical system that supports or is inimical to the American way of life, *rather than* as an academic discipline with a substantial and highly diverse content of its own. The casual or evasive treatment of religion in the curriculum has contributed to the confusion and religious illiteracy of college graduates as evidenced by the conclusion of a survey published in 1948, of "the way in which religion is treated in college reading materials" in thirteen academic disciplines:

For one thing, it is evident that religion is a neglected field of reading and study on the part of college students. The lightness of touch and even ignorance with which intellectual issues having a religious bearing or import are dealt with would seem little less than astonishing when the expansion of scholarship in general is taken into account. (*College Reading and Religion*, Yale University Press.)

During the past decade a new awareness of and appreciation for religious scholarship, particularly in the field of religious history and theology, has changed the tone and temper of college text-books and instruction, so that today it is not a neglected subject but one widely discussed.

Thoughtful educators recognize that value judgments are implicit in all academic disciplines. What value judgments should be made explicit, particularly in the social sciences and the humanities, is earnestly discussed. However, few educators in public institutions of higher learning would approve a program that would treat values primarily within the classical Christian frame of reference, as did many of their predecessors before the turn of the century, but the majority recognize that more attention should be given to the religious faiths that inform the students they teach. How this may be done in a highly pluralistic student body is an open question, one that goes beyond the scope of this article.

The more immediate question of particular concern is how a student may be introduced in a scholarly manner to his own religious heritage. A recent survey of how this is now being done in twenty-five state colleges and universities is informative ("Report of the National Consultative Conference on Religion and the State University," *Religious Education*, March-April, 1959). Several public institutions now have departments of religion or interdepartmental programs in religious studies. Several have developed types of cooperative programs in which credit is granted for courses taught in privately supported schools of religion, endowed chairs, institutes or student religious foundations.

On an elective basis these programs are reaching one in five in one state university and an average of one in fourteen of the students in the twenty-five institutions included in the study—a very substantial number. These programs, however, face a number of unnecessary obstacles not faced by other departments largely because their roles in their respective institutions are not, in my judgment, properly understood. Much of this misunderstanding arises from the kind of interpretation given to the separation principle.

### The Separation Principle

When the principle of the separation of Church and State was incorporated into our federal and state laws, institutions of higher learning were administered by private and for the most part Protestant religious bodies. The "wall of separation" between religion and education in Jefferson's day,



intended to prevent the "warring sects" from gaining control of the public schools, has after a century of conflicts become a dogma. The separation principle did not, however, rule out the teaching of value positions. Instead it placed the value positions held by the historic religious communities of faith at a disadvantage and opened the door for the teaching of Jefferson's Deism, Dewey's naturalistic humanism and various forms of secularism.

During the period of bitter conflict between the Protestant sects and the time when the religious heritage of the Jews was grossly misunderstood and the period when the Roman Catholic Church maintained a rigid dogmatism unrelieved by the wisdom of its scholarly tradition, this policy proved to be a practical necessity. There are many today who still hold that any modification of the so-called principle of separation would open the Pandora Box of religious controversy. What is not acknowledged by many public educators is that the omission of positive religious instruction is in itself a form of religious instruction. A growing number of citizens are now aware of this dilemma (see *Religion in America*, edited by John Cogley, Meridian Press).

At the present stage of religious illiteracy and lack of community inter-religious cooperation, attempts to deal with this problem in the elementary and secondary schools naturally evoke deep emotions. The simple fact is that conditions favorable to the teaching of religion on this level are limited and often lead to plans and programs that are either opposed or supported half-heartedly by the schools and the churches.

An entirely different set of circumstances, however, exists in public higher education. Here attendance is voluntary and students are more mature. Furthermore, the value implications of most fields of study are more apparent and frequently discussed. A growing number of faculty would approve the introduction of a department or program of religious studies if they had reasonable assurance that the religious community would support, or not oppose, such a program.

Three or four decades ago many administrators were willing to approve cooperative arrangements whereby private religious agencies were permitted to offer credit courses in religion. Today, if the opinions expressed in the Michigan Centennial publications are representative, most state university administrators and faculty are not so inclined. Rather they would insist that courses in this field should be administered by the university. This means that courses in specific religious traditions,

taught by instructors who know these traditions "from the inside," will continue to be the exception and that general courses in "religion" will be the rule. To those who understand the nature of theology, such an approach has serious limitations. It is, however, a gain over the anarchy that has existed.

In a recent address before the National Consultative Conference on "Religion and the State University," Paul Kauper, Professor of Law at the University of Michigan, pointed out that in his judgment the principle of separation, properly administered, places no obstacles in the way of teaching positive religion in public institutions of higher learning. Many members of governing boards, administrators and faculty, however, do not share his opinion. Even if the "law" does not prevent such courses, the fear of public opinion looms large in their minds.

By and large, the expansion of student religious organizations financed and administered by the respective religious bodies has been welcomed. These programs do not present a threat to the separation principle and their presence goes far to alleviate the anxiety of parents who not infrequently feel that these institutions are "godless" or irreligious. Nor are general courses in religion a problem. But the teaching of *positive* religion—the religion held by the students (few object to the teaching of primitive or ancient religion or the religions of other cultures)—is still considered sectarian teaching and a violation of the separation principle.

In spite of these differences, we are moving into a period in which the teaching of positive religion may become a part of the curriculum of public junior colleges and municipal and state universities, provided the religious communities—Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish—can work out a *modus vivendi* whereby they can develop a favorable (non-threatening) climate of public opinion, and provided qualified instructors can be found. The readers of *Christianity and Crisis* can play a crucial role in the shaping of public opinion to this end.

Those who are familiar with H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture* know that we who are Protestants have a rich heritage that is now mutilated and misrepresented both in our churches and in the instructional programs of public institutions of higher learning. The thousands of Protestant Tom Browns and Mary Smiths who will be lured not to a state university "somewhere out West" but to a junior college or to a municipal or state

university within a block of their homes may never be confronted by the living Christ as he is revealed in ancient and modern writings, nor ever have an opportunity to elect to study under a Robert Michaelson at the State University of Iowa or his counterpart at X University, or under an Arnold Nash or a comparable scholar at Y University. And by the same token young people from Jewish and Roman Catholic homes or other faiths may never read the best in their own religious traditions nor sit at the feet of their own scholars if they, too, are deprived of the opportunity to elect courses in religion while they are students.

In a religiously pluralistic society it is wishful thinking to expect a growth of mutual understand-

ing and good will to emerge from a religiously illiterate or purely secularistic citizenry. And we are exceedingly sanguine to expect to resolve the tensions on the lower educational levels when we turn out teachers unacquainted with their own religious heritage, to say nothing about their lack of knowledge of the traditions and ceremonials of other faiths.

The growth of these new cities of learning provides, in the words of Clarence Shedd, "open doors" for the religious communities. Changed attitudes toward the place of religious studies in the curriculum and a more flexible and equitable interpretation of the separation principle will present to future religious scholars a new frontier.

## Public Education and Protestant Consensus

CLAUD NELSON

**T**HERE ARE several important areas in which Protestants do not know each other's minds. As a consequence, issues arise on which we are not prepared to act unitedly—not only because we may not be in sufficient agreement to act effectively, but because we do not know how far we are in accord, nor whether we are agreed as to what are the essential considerations and goals in the given situation.

Our concern here is with education, particularly with religion and public education at the elementary and secondary levels. Let me briefly indicate some recent or current instances of Protestant division and seeming confusion.

In California last year many Protestants favored, while others helped to defeat, a measure to deprive parochial schools of tax exemption. Some Protestants favor and other Protestants oppose weekday religious education in public school buildings; the use of religious symbols and religious observances in and by the public schools, sometimes including Bible reading and prayer; a "common core" of religious instruction in the public school curriculum; religious "neutrality" of the public school; specific affirmation of theistic faith; federal aid to elementary education; parochial schools for their own children; unqualified veto of the payment from tax funds of bus transportation for children attending parochial schools.

The Department of Religion and Public Education of the National Council of Churches has

been engaged almost continuously since its formation in 1953 in seeking and developing as wide a Protestant consensus as possible on such issues. A working paper has been widely circulated during the past year. A draft of it was dissected, criticized and amended in 1958 and the amended paper was recently subjected to a similar process.

The responsible committee includes representation from other units of the Division of Christian Education. The Department of Religious Liberty participates actively in the discussions. Throughout most of its existence the Department of Religion and Public Education has profited by the participation of experienced public school teachers and administrators responsibly involved also in their churches locally or nationally. It now seems likely that the newly revised paper, after further consideration within the Division of Christian Education, will be submitted early next spring to the National Council constituency not only for further study but for official reaction. (The revised paper will be available next April for \$1.00 from the Department of Publication, N.C.C.C., 475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, N.Y.) At one point or another in the process, there has been unofficial criticism by non-Council Protestants and non-Protestant leaders.

### Formidable Difficulties

The difficulties and complications are formidable, not only for Protestants but for those of other faiths, for teachers and administrators, for legislators, for the community or society as a whole. How is responsibility to be apportioned among local,

Mr. Nelson is staff consultant to the Department of Religious Liberty of the National Council of Churches and has been a close observer of the process about which he writes.

state and national authorities, governmental and voluntary? How far should the legal-constitutional framework, which sets boundaries for educational policy, determine the policy and the program? Whose institution is the public school; what rights are to be taken into account; who is responsible for the child's education?

In the face of such difficulties, one must anticipate that any early consensus among Protestants will be of a limited nature. An official statement of any agreements recorded, however, can be of very great use for the guidance of both schools and churches. A limited consensus prepares the way for a wider one. The process followed so far, which will have to be continued, both discovers existing points of agreement and helps to develop others. The process also forces us to examine the data and to ascertain and face the facts, not merely theorize on the basis of preconceived desires. Do we know, for example, what percentage of the budget of a large rural school may be required for bus transportation?

Some of the most complex or controversial issues have not yet been adequately discussed by the Committee on Religion and Public Education, and I can in no sense speak officially. I shall, however, hazard some forecasts of probable conclusions and recommendations, reminding the reader that a fallible observer is writing of a process that has already surprised him at important points and may do so again.

### Expectations

The paper will strongly support public schools. It will set forth a Christian view of man and of life that gives direction and dynamic to its concern and its recommendations.

It will emphasize the stake of the whole community in education and its inescapable responsibilities, not forgetting the mission of the churches to and through individuals and institutions in the community. Such non-sectarian recognition of religion will be favored as the community may approve, guided by, maintaining and developing our American tradition—legal, social and religious. Minority rights must be respected but not allowed to function as a frustrating veto beyond the barriers set by law.

Recognizing that education that is not concerned with ultimate meanings and values is doomed to superficiality, the statement will not advocate a neutral stance on the part of the school with regard to religion. The school will not be asked to make theistic affirmations on its own authority,

but it cannot ignore statements made by national leaders or contained in historic official documents. Teachers must recognize the role that religion plays in our history, our institutions, our culture; to minimize or ignore its place is both a travesty on education and a violation of religious liberty. But religious indoctrination, sanctions and commitment must be left to the home and the church.

The department's paper will not favor attempts to include in the public school curriculum a "common core" of religious affirmation or instruction. A common core is likely to be a very small sort of common denominator; it would have different meanings in the contexts of different faiths; to teach it might well be repugnant to non-believers and violative of their rights.

### Released Time

To fill the gap between what the public school can do and what needs to be done if the culture transmitted to the child is to be integrated in his mind, weekday religious education classes will be recommended on a released time or comparable pattern. (There is a separate Department of Week-day Religious Education that the paper under discussion does not assume to represent.) The need for weekday religion classes is partly as a supplement to what the Sunday School and the home are likely to contribute, and partly as a favorable opportunity for relating religious instruction to the public school curriculum. The National Council staff has consistently advised compliance with the verdict in the McCollum Case barring "released time" religion classes from the public school buildings. The situation is less clear as to the problem of achieving cordial cooperation of public school authorities with weekday religious education while relieving them of administrative involvement.

Interdenominational sponsorship of weekday religious education may be expected to facilitate relations with public schools and integration of curriculum, as well as the enrollment of children of parents not affiliated with churches. Denominational sponsorship may nevertheless be administratively and financially easier.

### Limited State Aid

On the financial side, the statement under consideration will probably add nothing to what the National Council has said in support of federal aid to education (General Board, May, 1954). Further action here may well await evaluation of the consequences of the National Defense Education Act of 1958.

No disposition can be detected in favor of allocating educational tax funds to the direct or indirect support of parochial schools. "Public" is held to characterize not only the service rendered, but the control of the institution. Parochial schools



are as "public" as the churches which desire them and direct them.

Health benefits and free lunches provided for public school children should be made available to children attending parochial schools, not by way of subsidies but directly through agents of the government.

Payment of bus transportation for parochial school students out of funds voted for public schools will be opposed. Still under discussion: what is the distinguishing feature that separates the child's "welfare" from his "education"? If a community, under permissive state legislation and its support by the Supreme Court in the *Everson Case*, votes to pay bus transportation, what should be the financial-territorial limits, the administrative and budgetary arrangements? Might such funds be voted separately under a welfare rubric?

The paper can hardly ignore the question of religious observance and symbols in the public school but the problem and its possible solution appear with manifold variations. Only very general advice is likely to be or to seem relevant.

Denominations in and out of the National Council have long shared in the concerns that prompted the creation of the Department of Religion and Public Education and set it on the road that I have attempted to indicate. It is by no means a simple task to bring all the interests represented even in a single denomination into theoretical or practical accord in matters so complex. One may hope that the process and the paper reported here will encourage the denominations to approach this task with fresh insight, renewed determination and a sense of common concern that will lead to increased understanding and to parallel or cooperative action.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### A Eulogy Questioned

TO THE EDITORS: I'm curious why the eulogy to John Foster Dulles ("John Foster Dulles: Man of Faith," Henry P. Van Dusen, July 20) was included in *Christianity and Crisis*. Is it the province

### In Our Next Issue

Our readers will continue the Protestant-Roman Catholic dialogue in our Correspondence columns.

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of this magazine to give thanks for every man on the world political scene who has a good personal Christian character and who presumably proves it by calling his policies "righteous, moral, dynamic"? Even though Mr. Dulles attended church conferences, *C & C* must know many would claim his policies, for all his intentions, were patently unrighteous, amoral and stultifying. Is *C & C* thus going on record that it is a good thing he meant well and let's not think about the results, or is *C & C* taking a stand that his policies really were what he said they were?

What does *C & C* think of Mr. Dulles' policies? Isn't that far more important than telling sentimentally that Mr. Dulles' was able on one occasion to save the reputation of a subordinate who had run aground Mr. Dulles' own security system? One wonders how many other subordinates were unjustly ruined because they knew no personal friend of the Secretary. In short, Mr. Dulles was responsible for his own security system, and what a judgment on its incompetence that he himself should have to take time out (even if willing) to straighten an injustice. And incompetence here means un-Christian too because of the price in innocent human hurt.

Such a memorial address might have a place, but I think that place is not in a magazine that purports to give some Christian analysis whether actual policies really heighten or lessen the world crisis. One wonders if Mr. Dulles was not sentimentally eulogized because he was a personal friend of one of the editors.

(THE REV.) FREDERICK F. JOHNSON  
Greenfield, Massachusetts

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